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Usually the girl's party pays the costs of all the ceremonies in her village, while the boy's party pays at his village. Possibly, though we were never actually able to determine the proportion, the costs in the end are about the same for both parties. The boy's father has to pay out more in actual cash, but has to bear a lesser expense in the home in connection with the preparations. In reply to our enquiries, we were given various estimates, but probably no one knows exactly just what the costs are. Sometimes there may have been an exaggeration, but in the light of their economic level the costs are staggering. The cost of a regular marriage is hardly ever less than thirty rupees per family and it ranges from this anywhere up to one hundred rupees per family. In the latter case the people must have originally greater resources and feel that they must do things more lavishly. As the Kol almost never has any money saved or in hand, most money for such expenses must be borrowed; and with the economic level as it is the repayment of such loans is practically impossible. The debtor becomes a virtual slave to the *malguzar* from whom he borrows the money.

The marriages described above bear many marks of, and resemblances to, Hindu marriages. It is believed that in the main the above is a fairly consistent account of the Kol types of alliances. Enquiry from other places show certain variations in practice and order. There are still many details to be filled in, and there are many variant practices yet to be noted and compiled. The process is a complicated one, and without doubt there is considerable variation between village and village in the matter of details.

POLYGYNY. [If the husband can afford the added expense it is not uncommon for him to have two wives.] In a case where there are two wives, it is usually discovered that the second "wife" has not been married with all the ceremonies as was the first, and that in reality she is just "kept." This arrangement however is considered legal and binding and a feast to the local group usually atones for the irregularity of the procedure. In our survey of Barela we found that there were three households in which more than one wife was found. In one of these instances a quarrel was then in progress between the wives and twice within the period of two weeks the aggrieved wife had run away and the man had to go out and search for her. In Panagar one Kol was found to have five wives, one of whom boasted to us that it was a sign of strength on the part of the husband. But a man standing by slyly remarked: "But look at their clothes and their condition." Kols expect their wives to work and so they are often looked upon as

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159
[539] Wherever thou goest
There a fire flares up.
You are haunted by Saturn (ill luck)
So where art thou going?

This verse sums up the story of my life.

When I was in Balaghat I did not marry. I left work there and went on foot to Sukari to see my sister and stayed there for eight years. [836 In Gondia I kept a woman with me, but did not marry her, and had 848] two children by her. From Sukari the four of us came by foot to Padriganj and from there bought tickets to return to Barela. We had but little money in hand, and although all our relatives were living together in Barela they would not take me back and I had to build a separate hut.

When I was ten or twelve years old I worked in the fort (Gun Carriage Factory, Jubbulpore) when its foundations were being built and for two years received four annas a day. Carrying dirt was my work at that time.

Just now, sir, I am very thin but before this I was very healthy and strong. Now I am working as a coolie and am settled here and hope never to leave Barela again. The woman I took to live with [163] me in Gondia is still with me and altogether she has given birth to seven children, five of them having died, two when they were quite old. My son is sick and often has fits.

[262] I have had a hard time in life. I have had no food and ate bread made of mango kernels and the flowers of the *semal* tree. And many other things which the ordinary man never eats. At the time of the great famine this was my lot. Rice was then four annas a seer, and we could not afford it. A few months ago I was very ill and we had [758] no money so my wife had to get roots and leaves from the jungle. When I am sick I am not able to work and we all suffer. I am ashamed to ask for help from any one. Three years ago we were both very ill and we simply closed the door and remained inside. Our relatives [602] didn't help us with either food or money, but both of us recovered.

[426] I have a debt of about Rs. 4 or 5 but never in my life have I taken a large loan. I never drink wine except when invited to some wedding festivities. I am not in this habit and know that it is not good to drink liquor. I don't know the disadvantages of drink because I don't drink. Of course this I know, that if you are intoxicated then anyone may come, kick you and rob you of what you may have on your person. There is loss of money too. The same money can be

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159 and my parents. My father asked me: "Harlal, did you bring any money with you?" I said, "Yes, I had money, but I spent it all." He did not say any more nor scold me, but asked me to live in the house and do coolie work along with them. But I did not like this and again left Barela and began to work again in the same bungalow where I was a *panka* puller and continued to work there for a whole year at Rs. 12/-.

Fortunately a big flood washed away the railway bridge over [464] the Nerbudda river and there was much demand for workers to rebuild it. I went there and got a job and the railway authorities liked my work and were pleased by my skill and I was given the work of a blacksmith where I worked happily for six years.

During this time my father also was working steadily and was able to collect some money for my marriage as I was past the marriageable age. He called me back for the marriage and I had to return, because I too was anxious to get married and had some money [465] saved up for it. But after my marriage I again left home and went back to my work on the railway, for by that time I was getting Rs. 19/- per month, which is a very good salary. I left my new wife with my parents. My father came to see me at my work, and walked the whole distance of forty miles and pleaded with me to go back to the house because they were all missing me a great deal. So I took six days leave and came back to Barela. When the people of my Kol community saw me they all began to give me advice, saying that half a *chapati* in your own home is better than a whole *chapati* in another place. So I listened to their advice and did not return to my work on the railway.

After a year at home there arose a great quarrel between my [578] father and myself. My father began to ill treat me so that my wife and I left Barela and went to Kharara Ghat where my parent-in-laws and some other relatives were living. As there was much wood in the jungle about Kharara Ghat both of us began to cut wood and carry it to Jubbulpore to be sold there. But as time went on we became 159 very hard up for money and we asked our parents and relatives to ● 426 give us some money, but they absolutely refused, so we had to borrow money from a money-lender on security. We had some jewellery and ornaments, and with them as security we borrowed Rs. 100/- and with this we began to buy wood and collect it in a great heap near our village of Kharara Ghat. This we sold at a profit in Jubbulpore. In the meantime when my father thought I was well off he asked me for a loan of Rs. 25/- and as I had no cash at that time I had to refuse him saying that at present I had none. I also told him that I had borrowed money from others and had left the jewellery as security for

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that amount and that the money is being used in my trade of buying and selling wood. He got very angry at me for that and took away all the wood that I had, along with my bullock cart, and brought them to Barela. He not only took these things but also paid my debt at the money-lender's and took all our jewellery which I had left as security. So we became dependent upon him again, and our condition seemed helpless.

For two years both my wife and myself had a very hard time. We had no tools to work with, nor money, nor clothes, and also no heart to work anywhere. I borrowed Rs. 2/- but that amount was all spent for food. Later we took courage and again started to sell wood. We used to go out to the jungles together and I used to carry over a *maund* a day to Jubbulpore, a distance of eight miles each way. But this heavy work was too much for me and I became ill. For two more years we suffered very much. Father took away all that we had and so we were again without anything. After my health was recovered I again began to sell some wood and little by little I was able to carry greater loads to the city. By the money thus earned I was able to buy a few tools and by the third year we were again independent, and these tools are still (1937) helping me to retain my self respect and earn a living for my family.

At present I have learned to do many kinds of work: especially the work of a mason which I prefer above the others. I also do some carpentry work when it is available. I am able, when I work, to earn from eight annas to a rupee a day, and this is enough. But if there should be a long period without work we suffer.

I am still on bad terms with my father and while I am now living in Barela I am living in a separate house which I rent for eight annas a month. My sister is not yet married though she is about fourteen or fifteen years old. My first baby died when it was a month old but the next child, a son, is still living. I have only one wife. I don't want to keep two wives because they are no advantage and full of troubles.

Manbodhi: A Centenarian Kol

I belong to the Shivari family of Kols and was born in Rewa State about 100 years ago. When I was born my father was working as a serf for some farmer. When I was about 25 years old my father died, but he had left Rewa State when I was but fifteen days old. My maternal uncle brought our family to Jubbulpore where we stayed a few weeks and then started on foot to Nagpur (about 200 miles)

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Rs. 4-8-0 per 1,000 tiles molded and put on the rack to harden. They told us that the average Kol worker would mold about 1,000 tiles per week.

In Panagar there are about 100 families of Kols. Some of them keep chickens and sell the few eggs they get in the local bazaar, or even take them to Jubbulpore on market days. Three or four own bullock carts. The rest of the community divide their time between working on the roads and doing coolie work in the fields when such work is available. This brings them from two to three annas per day. This work is far from steady, being largely seasonal.

In Benda village there are fifteen houses of Kols. Their main work is breaking stone for the metalled roads and preparing limestone for the kilns. They believe that by steady work they can make up to Rs. three per week, but the work is very hard and the hours are long. A few collect *tendu* leaves in season and when other work is slack they go out to the jungles and cut wood. They can earn from three to three and a half annas per day in that way. None of the Benda Kols does any farming.

At Salavara village on the Gaur River, we found that all were engaged in breaking stones for road metal. Their report seemed to indicate that they had to work harder for what they got than some other groups. They said it took them fifteen days to break a *saikara*—a stone measuring approximately 1,000 cubic feet—that two men were required and that they received Rs. 2-8-0 for the *saikara*. Five years ago, they said, they got Rs. 4/- for the same measure. They claim that the work is also harder now as they have to go further for suitable rock.

At Garha close to Jubbulpore, there is a fair-sized Kol community. The village is quite distinct from any other place and about 100 Kol families dwell there. Their occupations are various, and but few have steady work. This group consists mostly of coolies who get work wherever it is available or where the best wages are offered. Sawing wood is a common opening as they do not live far from the timber yards where all the sawing of planks is done by hand. During the wheat harvest they are nearly all away in the fields, leaving their houses empty for the few weeks of the harvesting season.

On a preliminary visit to Rewa State we went to a small Kol community not far from Rewa City. These Kols have considerable land for which they pay rental to a Mahratta landlord. What this group told us has been confirmed by many others, both in and out of Rewa State and seems to characterize the conditions of the Kols there. One informant told us that he was married about twelve years pre-

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566 viously, at which time he incurred a debt of Rs. fourteen for the ex-
426 penses of the wedding. This was borrowed from a *Thakur* of a near-
[124] by village who appeared most glad to lend it to him. Ever since that day this *Thakur* has considered him as his serf, and he is supposed to go daily to him; and even though he has worked for the *Thakur* for the past twelve years he has not cleared the debt and does not believe that he ever will. He is virtually a slave of this man, is on call at any time, and must give him the first work until he no longer requires him. For each day's work the *Thakur* will give him 1½ *seers* of *chana* (usually *Dolichos lablab*) or perhaps the same amount of barley still in the head. Money was never given, nor rice or wheat. This group of Kols in Rewa was a very intelligent one on the whole, but indicated that Rewa State was not a place where one could get more than just the necessary food. As one expressed it: "In Rewa there is no
[538] stomach hunger, only money hunger." This appeared to be quite a common expression over a wide area. Food was available there, but no money for the other necessities of life nor for weddings, burials and the like.

339 In centres like Kymore and Katni where there are large cement
464 works, the majority of the coolies employed in the many types of
434 manual labour are Kols. The work is very hard and the wages are low: usually not more than four annas a day for males and three annas for female workers.

434 Kharara Ghat, the isolated Kol village, is perhaps as independent
[423] economically as any Kol group studied by us. It was previously noted that this village controls about eighty acres of land. They say that ordinarily they do not sell the farm products, rather keeping
[162] them for the use of the village as well as holding a small reserve for emergencies. The village contains about 135 adult persons and the land farmed takes care of their food. Money for other needs is gained
222 in many ways: during the months of May and June the leaves of the
276 *tendu* tree (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) are picked for use in the *biri*
434 manufacture. The leaves are gathered in the early morning or the
438 evenings, and in the heat of the day the people sit under the trees or on the verandas of their houses and arrange the leaves in bundles of one hundred each, tying them with fibre. These bundles are then sold to contractors at the rate of four annas per hundred bundles. Prices vary somewhat according to the quality and the demand. The Kharara Ghat folk claim that they earn from Rs. 400 to 500 per year from the sale of these leaves.

434 Kharara Ghat has other sources of income. The village is situa-
313 ted on a jungly section on the edge of the reserved forest. Wood is

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When the reserved forests are used there are certain fees that the Kols must pay. In Katni, along the Great Deccan Road, we found that the area of the house was considered for assessing the tax, and that the rate there was annas four per one hundred square feet of land area. In addition to this each family had to pay four annas per year for "sanitation". The standard rates for grazing cattle near Katni are as follows: buffalo Rs. 2-8-0 per year; cattle 0-12-0 to 1-4-0; goats 0-8-0 and to the shepherd who took them out daily annas four per head per year. [233]

426 ●

Debt. Debt does not seem to be as heavy a burden upon Kols in British India as it is upon their Hindu neighbours. The normal debt of the Indian cultivator has been estimated to be well over two hundred rupees. [171] The surveys we made among the Kols seem to indicate that most of them will be found to have small debts of one kind or another, but that it is not the heavy burden that is so often found in village India; also that the Kol *panchayats* or councils are active in discouraging indebtedness. [623] Out of eleven Kol families questioned in Barela six indicated that they were in debt. The highest debt was Rs. 16/- and the total of the six amounted to only Rs. 42/-. This is much lower than one would expect. Debts were mostly acquired for clothes and marriages. They were made in the Barela bazaar and interest on them was paid at the rate of two pice per rupee per month, which is an interest rate of 37½%. On the other hand one Kol family reported that they made loans to farmers and others on good security and that they had about Rs. 300/- loaned out in that manner.

426 585

It was sometimes the custom, in order to avoid debt at the time of marriage on the part of some poor family, for members of the village to subscribe one rupee per family to help defray the expenses. This was considered as a loan which would be paid back later without interest charges if the family was able. The heads of the Kharara Ghat families were questioned about debt. It was found that only three were really involved: one owed fifty rupees incurred by the purchase of a field and a wedding in the family; another ten rupees, also for a wedding and a third fifteen rupees for the same reason. In some other places such as Panagar and Deori, debt was found to be more common, and in Panagar the Kols who farmed land would often take as a loan an amount up to one-third of the expected produce of their lands. [623] Usually the respective *panchayats* watch the matter of the indebtedness of the community quite closely and in some places money may not be borrowed without its consent. In the industrial and city centres indebtedness is quite common, much more so than [369]

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426 under village conditions. Almost every time we were in the Kol
369 sections in and close to Jubbulpore we met Pathan money-lenders
who were there to collect what they could of interest due to them. It
[178] appears that as Kols come into close contact with city life, their natural
hesitation to acquire a debt is broken down, and money is taken as a
loan which they have practically no expectation of being able
to repay.

426 It should also not be overlooked that in some sections there is a
state of perpetual debt on the part of the Kol villager. Money is not
exactly borrowed—it is rather a gift which cannot be paid back, but
which means a life-long obligation of service to the giver. This is
particularly true of conditions in Rewa State and the more backward
parts of the Central Provinces.

525 GAMBLING AND BEGGING. Some enquiries were also made
concerning gambling. The *panchayat* allows it on certain festival
[623] days such as *Dewali* when all groups gamble, and also it is allowed
occasionally in private. The gambling is not for large stakes and
most communities seem to avoid it. At present the most popular
form of gambling found mostly near cities is said to be with the use
of playing cards. Under village conditions a block of wood is taken
and on the six sides numbers are marked. These blocks are thrown
somewhat in the manner of dice. Coins are also thrown, singly and
in combination.

735 There are not many beggars among the Kols and we came across
nothing of this type although the Census Report indicated that some
were returned as "beggars, vagrants and prostitutes". When we made
our enquiries they indicated that they felt a responsibility for those of
their own group who were in need, and that they tried to care for such
during the period of their dependency.

474 We did not find that they made use of co-operative societies, although
in the case of Barela, there was one which they might have used. As
184 far as we were able to observe no active interest was taken in politics,
665 and none of the village Kols reported as ever having cast a ballot. It
is otherwise with the Kols in Jubbulpore, for the Congress party has
been very active and all who have been eligible have been recorded
under its banner.

571 From many enquiries it is clear that among themselves, apart
575 from the *panchayat*, they have no clubs nor associations of any
kind.

181 From the above survey of the economic conditions existing among
735 the Kols it will have been seen that they are among the poor and dis-